



V-CAN CONNECTOR

Voluntary Community Assistance Network

Indiana Eligibility Modernization Project

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Director's Update

Upcoming Enhancements in 2009!

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Resources

FSSA and the IBM-led Coalition have been working on ways to improve the new system. Throughout spring and summer 2009, FSSA and the IBM-led Coalition will continue to improve services to Hoosiers through several enhancements developed in response to feedback from V-CAN members. I would like to highlight some of the enhancements we have been working on over the past few months.

Enhancements targeted for implementation in spring 2009 include:

A New Paper Application

A shorter paper application will be available for applicants to apply for Cash Assistance (TANF), Food Stamps and Medicaid. FSSA and the IBM-led Coalition held focus groups with clients and V-CAN members to solicit input in the development of a new version of the application.

The new paper application will be available when applicants print or request a mailed copy of the Indiana Application for Assistance.

Changes to the Food Stamp Redetermination Schedule

The redetermination period for clients receiving Food Stamps will be extended from six to 12 months. For non-elderly and non-disabled clients receiving Food Stamps, a short questionnaire will be mailed to clients at six months and a redetermination form and phone interview will be completed at 12 months. Elderly and disabled clients receiving Food Stamps will receive a redetermination form to complete at 12 months and will not have to complete an interview.

An Electronic Signature for the Online Application

An electronic signature will be available to applicants completing the online application. Applicants using the online application may sign the application

electronically rather than printing, signing and submitting the Indiana Application for Assistance signature page. *NOTE: A signed signature page is still required for applicants completing the paper application or applying through an interactive, in-person interview with a worker.*

New Online Case Status Functionality

Applicants, clients and Authorized Representatives will be able to view most documents submitted to the Service Center. The online case status tool will contain a "View Documents" link that can be selected to view documents submitted for a case within the last six months.

In summer 2009, FSSA and the IBM-led Coalition will implement the following enhancement:

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The V-CAN was developed as a way to provide information to organizations and providers working with clients. If you know of organizations or service providers in your community that would be interested in eligibility modernization updates and the V-CAN, please let us know!

Please email vcn@us.ibm.com if you know of organizations or service providers in your area that should know more about eligibility modernization and the V-CAN.

V-CAN Registration

(Statewide, as of 1/23/09)

Access Points.....682

Publicized...198

Non-Publicized...484

Referral.....319

Informational.....408

Total.....1,409

V-CAN User Guide Update!

A new version of the **V-CAN User Guide** is now available. The V-CAN User Guide is a desk-top reference for V-CAN members working with or on behalf of clients to apply for or manage benefits in the new system. Updated in December 2008, the V-CAN User Guide contains information on recent enhancements and new processes for V-CAN members.

Go to www.in.gov/fssa, click "Eligibility Modernization" and "Communications" to download a copy today!

Director's Update, continued

Phone Calls to Remind Clients of Deadlines

Automated phone calls will be made to clients and Authorized Representatives to remind them of upcoming interview appointments and deadlines for submitting required documentation.

In addition to these enhancements, a new tool has been developed for human service agencies working with

(rather than on behalf of) clients to check case status. Human service agencies may register with the IBM-led Coalition to access case status for clients working with the agency. Registered Agencies may access case status for clients who have signed a release in any of the following ways:

- **Online** (through the Registered Agency Web Portal);
- **On the phone**; or

- **Case inquiry emails** (with specialists at the FSSA Service Center).

More information on these enhancements will be provided soon. I hope you and your clients find these enhancements helpful as you use the new system!

V-CAN Profile: Heart House, Inc.

This V-CAN Profile is the eighth in a series of profiles highlighting V-CAN members throughout Indiana.

Heart House, Inc. is a 60-bed shelter located in Dearborn County. Founded in 1998, Heart House provides temporary housing to families with children, single individuals or married adults who have become homeless through emergency or household crises.

Heart House provides a variety of social services to individuals and families with the goal of providing resources for:

- Achieving or maintaining economic self-support to prevent, reduce, or eliminate dependency;
- Preventing or remedying neglect, abuse, or exploitation of children or adults unable to protect their own interests;
- Preserving, rehabilitating, or reuniting families;

- Preventing or reducing institutional care by providing for community-based care, home-based care, or other forms of less intensive care; and
- Securing referral or admission for institutional care when other forms of care are not appropriate.

Heart House also provides employment training, personal counseling, GED training and other classes that emphasize childcare, personal finances and household management. As the only emergency shelter in southeastern Indiana, Heart House has served almost 1,500 homeless individuals.

Heart House is a V-CAN Access Point, offering on-site access for residents to apply for or manage their public assistance. Heart House Director Craig Beckley sees benefit in offering access to residents. "Heart House serves individuals and

families from Dearborn, Franklin, Ohio, Ripley, and Switzerland counties. The new system has allowed our residents to access the assistance they need online or over the phone, without visiting a county office for help. This is an added benefit for our residents and helps leverage resources needed to help individuals and families become self-sufficient."

In addition to the shelter, Heart House also offers two transitional housing facilities. In these facilities, families live and pay modest rent while planning their eventual return to market rate housing. These transitional housing facilities offer a controlled environment where tenants re-learn maintenance of financial obligations while receiving financial literacy training. These facilities fill the gap between living at an emergency shelter and living a self-sufficient lifestyle.

For more information on Heart House, email Craig Beckley at hearthouse@seidata.com.

Q&A Corner



FSSA and the IBM-led Coalition are making several enhancements to the new system throughout spring and summer 2009. Based on these enhancements, a few questions and answers are provided to help V-CAN members use these new tools and processes.

Q: How does the electronic signature work?

A: Applicants completing the online application may sign the application electronically, rather than printing, signing and submitting the signature page of the application. After completing the online application, applicants will select the "Sign and Apply Now" button contained in the online application, to sign and submit their application.

Q: What can I see when using the online case status "View Documents" link?

A: Applicants, clients, and Authorized Representatives may view documents submitted for a case within

the last six months.

Documents covered by HIPAA privacy regulations will not be available for viewing.

Q: Can my agency request copies of the new paper application for our office?

A: No, the new paper application will contain a case-specific bar-code, so it should not be photocopied. To get a copy of the new paper application, applicants may print or request a mailed copy of the application.

Q: When will the reminder phone calls to clients occur?

A: Starting in summer 2009, FSSA and the IBM-led Coalition will make

automated phone calls to remind clients and/or Authorized Representatives of upcoming appointments (two business days prior to an appointment) or deadlines to submit supporting documentation (four business days after the 2032 was sent).

Online Tools Reminder: If you use the online application or Registered Agency Web Portal, make sure to disable your web browser pop-up blocker on the www.ifcem.com website to view the online application and Agency Registration documents.

Vanderburgh County V-CAN Members Connect with the Homeless!

Vanderburgh Homeless Connect, an event sponsored by the city-county Commission on Homelessness, will take place on March 12, 2009, at the Veterans Memorial Coliseum in Evansville.

People in Vanderburgh County who are homeless or near-homeless are invited to the four-hour event, which offers services to those in need. Attendees will have access to many essential services including:

- **Employment/Education** - Job search, GED, basic literacy, and Vocational Rehabilitation;
- **Health** - Mental health, substance abuse, dental and medical health screenings;
- **Public Assistance** - On-site help obtaining photo ID's, birth certificates,

social security cards and completing applications for TANF, Food Stamps, Hoosier Healthwise and the Healthy Indiana Plan (*the FSSA Division of Family Resources mobile public assistance unit will be available at the event*);

- **Housing** - Section 8, transitional housing and permanent supportive housing.

Legal, financial and child care services will also be available, in addition to haircuts and "take away" items like non-perishable food, personal care items, and special items solely for Veterans.

Vanderburgh Homeless Connect is a component of *Destination: Home*, the ten-year plan to end homelessness in Evansville and Vanderburgh County. *Destination: Home* aims to "maximize resources and access to services

through coordination of existing services and providers."

Several V-CAN member agencies are involved with the Vanderburgh Homeless Connect event, including Aurora, Inc., ECHO Community Health Care, United Way of Southeastern Indiana - 211, and WorkOne Southeast.

Kat Isbell, Education Specialist with Aurora, Inc., believes the event provides a great way for residents to get essential help. "This is a one-day, one-stop site for members of our community to connect with much needed services and programs. It is truly a coordinated effort among federal, state and local programs to provide access to tools and services in one place, on one day, with one mission."

Wyeth Hatfield, Social Work and Outreach Coordinator with ECHO Community Health Care, sees the event as a great way to connect Hoosiers with information about and access to health coverage programs for themselves and their families. "Offering access to health coverage applications and medical providers is one more way to promote healthy families in our community."

For more information on *Vanderburgh Homeless Connect* or *Destination: Home*, visit www.destination-home.info.



Family Nutrition Program

Helping Hoosiers Eat Better for Less!

The Family Nutrition Program (FNP) is a nutrition education program that targets limited resource audiences throughout Indiana. The FNP provides free information about food and nutrition to individuals and groups either at home or in a community setting.

Through a variety of hands-on food preparation activities, the FNP helps Hoosiers stretch food dollars to last the whole month, find out about food stamp benefits and other community resources,

make healthy snacks for children and learn other techniques to make healthy food choices.

The free sessions offered by the FNP are a great way for community agencies and service providers to enhance services to clients. For example, your agency could host a group session or promote in-home sessions to clients. Your clients will benefit from the interactive session by learning new ways to maximize resources and prepare healthy food.

The FNP is funded by Purdue University Cooperative Extension Service in partnership with the Indiana Family and Social Services Administration and the United States Department of Agriculture.

For more information on the FNP or to request a group or in-home session, contact your local Purdue Extension office at 1-888-398-4636 or go to www.ces.purdue.edu/cfs/topics/FNP.



Healthy Indiana Plan (HIP) Update



January 1, 2009 marked the one year anniversary of the Healthy Indiana Plan (HIP). After one year of offering the program to Hoosiers, enrollment in HIP continues to grow!

To date, over 129,000 Hoosiers have applied and over 39,000 people have gained health coverage through HIP.

If you or your clients have questions about HIP, call 1-877-GET-HIP-9, or visit www.HIP.in.gov. If you would like to order HIP brochures and applications for your office, go to www.in.gov/fssa, click "Eligibility Modernization," then "Communications" to find the HIP materials order form.

How Can You Get More Information?

If you have questions about Eligibility Modernization or the V-CAN, there are several ways you can get more information:

- Attend V-CAN training prior to implementation in your region
- Visit www.in.gov/fssa and click "Eligibility Modernization", then "Communications" to review presentations, common questions and answers, and other helpful information about the V-CAN and Eligibility Modernization
- Email Us! Send your questions to vcan@us.ibm.com

Mark your calendars! The next issue of the *V-CAN Connector* will be published in April 2009.

